

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A steering column assembly for a vehicle, comprising an upper column assembly, a lower column assembly, and a central collapsible steering shaft passing through the upper and lower column assemblies, there being a central bearing including a cylindrical first tube of plastics material that surrounds said central collapsible steering shaft, that is slidably mounted in a bore of a second tube of said upper column assembly with an outer peripheral surface of said first tube being in slidable contact with an inner peripheral surface of said bore, and that rotatably supports said central collapsible steering shaft at a lower end of said first tube.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said tube is a molded thermoplastics tube.

4. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said tube is a molded glass fiber-filled thermoplastics tube.

5. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said tube is a molded carbon-fiber-filled thermoplastics tube.

6. (Original) An assembly according to claim 1, and being rake adjustable.

7. (Original) An assembly according to claim 1, and being reach adjustable.

8. (Previously Presented) A steering column assembly for a vehicle, comprising an upper column assembly, a lower column assembly, and a collapsible steering shaft extending within the upper and lower column assemblies, there being a central bearing including a cylindrical tube of plastics material that surrounds said central collapsible steering

shaft, that is axially slidably mounted in a machined bore of said upper column assembly with an outer peripheral surface of said tube in slidable contact with an inner peripheral surface of said bore, said central collapsible steering shaft being rotatably supported to a lower end of said tube through a first rotary bearing and to said upper steering column assembly through a second rotary bearing.

9. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 8, wherein said tube is a molded thermoplastics tube.

10. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 8, wherein said tube is a molded glass fiber-filled thermoplastics tube.

11. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 8, wherein said tube is a molded carbon-fiber-filled thermoplastics tube.

12. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 8, and being rake adjustable.

13. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 8, and being reach adjustable.

14. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said bore of said second tube is a machined bore ~~and said first tube has an outer peripheral surface in slidable contact with an inner peripheral surface of said bore.~~